

Message Text

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ACTION IO-11

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 OFA-01 DLOS-04 SAL-01

OES-03 /102 W

----- 059125

R 281230Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8879

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 0533

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, TD, US, UN

SUBJECT: MULTILATERAL INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES OF
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

REF: STATE 37591

1. THE EMBASSY'S RESPONSE TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN
PARAGRAPH SEVEN OF REFTEL FOLLOWS:

2. A. AS A SMALL COUNTRY, TRINIDAD LOOKS TO INTER-
NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS AS A PRIMARY
FOCUS FOR ITS FOREIGN POLICY. IT BELIEVES THAT IN THESE
MULTILATERAL FORA ITS MOST IMPORTANT INTERESTS CAN BEST
BE FURTHERED AND PROTECTED IN THE COMPANY OF OTHER
SMALL, LIKE-MINDED STATES. THESE INTERESTS RELATE
CHIEFLY TO ITS OWN SECURITY AND TO ITS ECONOMIC AND
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT. FOR ITS SIZE, TRINIDAD HAS
PLAYED A REASONABLY ACTIVE ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL
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ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES, PARTICULARLY IN THE

LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCES AND IN REGIONAL GROUPINGS SUCH AS ECLA AND CARICOM.

3. THE ONLY SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSAL FOR WHICH TRINIDAD IS NOW LINING UP SUPPORT IN THE MULTILATERAL AREA IS THE SPECIAL LAW OF THE SEA REGIME FOR THE CARIBBEAN PROPOSED BY PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS. FROM ITS PAST PERFORMANCE, TRINIDAD CAN BE EXPECTED TO SUPPORT INITIATIVES PROMOTING DECOLONIZATION AND MAJORITY RULE IN AFRICA AND TO VOTE WITH THE THIRD/NON-ALIGNED WORLD ON QUESTIONS OF REORDERING THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SYSTEM, CONTROLLING MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS, AND PROMOTING THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. ON MAJOR UN POLITICAL ISSUES SUCH AS KOREA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, WHICH THE GOTT CONSIDERS TO BE OF ONLY REMOTE CONCERN, TRINIDAD WILL CONTINUE TO ABSTAIN.

4. B. TRINIDAD IS RELATIVELY MODERATE BUT PASSIVE MEMBER OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT AND THE GROUP OF 77. WHILE IT MAY ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH THESE GROUPINGS AND GENERALLY VOTE ALONG THE SAME LINES, IT DOES NOT CONSIDER ITSELF TO BE ABSOLUTELY BOUND BY EITHER GROUP'S DECISIONS. ON A SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL, TRINIDAD HAS TRIED, WITH ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS, TO DEVELOP A COMMON POSITION ON IMPORTANT ISSUES WITH ITS CARICOM PARTNERS.

5. C. AS A GENERAL RULE, TRINIDADIAN DELEGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ARE GIVEN FULL INSTRUCTIONS ON MAJOR ISSUES AND GENERAL GUIDANCE ON HANDLING OTHER QUESTIONS. DELEGATES HAVE NEITHER THE FLEXIBILITY NOR THE POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE TO DEVIATE MUCH FROM THEIR INSTRUCTIONS. AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE, THE GOTT DECISION-MAKING AND INSTRUCTION-GIVING PROCESS IS NOT CAPABLE OF MOVING WITH A GREAT DEAL OF SPEED OR FLEXIBILITY SINCE ALL IMPORTANT DECISIONS ARE MADE EITHER BY THE CABINET IN FORMAT SESSION OR BY THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF. WE HAVE FOUND THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND THE T&T MISSION AT THE UN APPARENTLY TO BE RVZHER COMPLETE, AT LEAST WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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REGARD TO MAJOR ISSUES, AFD THE AMBASSADOR IN NEW YORK RARELY HAS MUCH LATITUDE IN HIS INSTRUCTIONS. WITH REGARD TO OTHER INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS, DELEGATIONS USUALLY REPORT ONLY AFTER RETURNING HOME OR ONLY IN RUDIMENTARY DETAIL AND THEREFORE INITIAL INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN AT THE BEGINNING OR WELL-ESTABLISHED GOTT POLICIES GENERALLY GOVERN THE DELEGATION VOTING PATTERNS.

6. D. WITHOUT EXCEPTION, TRINIDAD REPRESENTATIVES ARE FIRMLY CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND BY PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS WHO, UNTIL RECENTLY, WAS HIMSELF MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS. FOR THE MOST PART, THESE REPRESENTATIVES ARE EITHER DISCIPLINED AND CAUTIOUS CIVIL SERVANTS OR POLITICAL FIGURES WHO OWE THEIR POSITIONS TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

7. E. THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICERS OF THAT MINISTRY ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE AND WILLING TO LISTEN TO AND DISCUSS U.S. REPRESENTATIONS WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS. THEY VIEW SUCH CONSULTATIONS AS A NORMAL PART OF BILATERAL RELATIONS. TO GET VOTING INSTRUCTIONS CHANGED, HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER MUST BE INVOLVED. WE DO HAVE EVIDENCE THAT FORCEFUL REPRESENTATIONS TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER ARE CONVEYED TO

THE PRIME MINISTER, BUT SOMETIMES THERE IS NO ADEQUATE SUBSTITUTE FOR REPRESENTATIONS DIRECTLY TO THE LATTER. HOWEVER, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS A VERY LIMITED TOLERANCE

FOR SUCH ENTREATIES, PARTICULARLY ON ISSUES WHICH HE CONSIDERS PERIPHERAL FOR TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO OR WHEN WE ARE PRESSING HEAVILY TO CHANGE AN ABSTENTION INTO A POSITIVE VOTE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 0533

8. THE GOTT FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT ITS LEAST CONTROVERSIAL STANCE ON MANY ISSUES IS TO ABSTAIN AND RESERVE ITS PARTISAN VOTES FOR ISSUES IT CONSIDERS IMPORTANT TO IT. THE GOVERNMENT IS MUCH MORE UNDERSTANDING OF OUR REPRESENTATIONS WHEN WE ARE LOBBYING TO CHANGE A VOTE ON WHICH TRINIDAD HAS TAKEN A STANCE, BUT WHEN WE TRY TO OVERTURN AN ABSTENTION OR A CLEAR PRECEDENT FOR ABSTENTION ON AN ISSUE OUR REPRESENTATIONS ARE OFTEN RESENTED.

GOTT HAS A LONG-TERM POLICY REGARDING ABSTENTIONS AND IS NOT LOATH TO REMIND US THAT THE USG HAS ALSO ABSTAINED IN THE UN MANY TIMES ON "ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE" WHICH ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE GOTT 4:E.G. THE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF BELIZE; SOUTH AFRICA, RHODESIA, AND NAMIBIA).

9. NEITHER MINISTRY OFFICIALS NOR THE PRIME MINISTER REALLY ACCEPT THE POSTULATE THAT DISAGREEMENTS ON MULTILATERAL ISSUES MAY AFFECT BILATEFAL RELATIONS.
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REALISTICALLY THEY KNOW THAT THE U.S. HAS VERY FEW LEVERS TO USE AGAINST TRINIDAD AND A SIZEABLE ECONOMIC INTEREST TO PROTECT HERE.

10. THE GOTT HAS INFREQUENTLY SOLICITED U.S. SUPPORT ON SUBSTANTIVE Y SUES SUCH AS THE PROPOSAL FOR A SPECIAL LAW OF THE SEA REGIME FOR THE CARIBBEAN. THESE SOLICITATIONS RARELY OPEN UP INTO A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF TRINIDAD'S INTERESTS OR PRIORITIES IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HAVE NOT GIVEN THE U.S. ANY REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE ON OTHER ISSUES.7-
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